

Financial Education for College Access and Success Program (FY) 2010
Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education
August 19, 2010

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who may apply for a Financial Education for College Access and Success grant?

A State educational agency (SEA), as defined in section 9101(41) of the ESEA, in a State with personal finance standards or a consortium of such SEAs, may apply for a Financial Education for College Access and Success grant. An SEA, as defined by section 9101(41) of the ESEA, is the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary schools and secondary schools.

NOTE: The Financial Education for College Access and Success program is meant to be a collaborative effort within the State, which is why there is a requirement for a project team with input and expertise provided by different members. The applicant SEA must work in collaboration with other entities, including State agencies administering elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education, and career and technical education. SEAs are also encouraged to partner with other State agencies, institutions of higher education, and other institutions or organizations listed in the Federal Register Notice Inviting Applications.

2. Do any special rules apply to an application from a consortium of SEAs, as opposed to an application from a single SEA?

Yes, there are special rules governing group applications in part 75 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) (34 CFR §§ 75.127-75.129). These rules require an application from a group or consortium of SEAs (34 CFR §75.128) to designate one of the SEAs in the consortium or group as the applicant for the grant. If a consortium application is selected for funding, we would award the grant to the SEA designated as the applicant (34 CFR §§ 75.127-75.129) and that applicant SEA would be legally responsible for the use of grant funds and for ensuring that the project carried out by the consortium is carried out in accordance with all applicable Federal requirements.

If a consortium of SEAs applies for a grant, the members of the consortium must enter into an agreement that (1) details the activities that each member of the consortium plans to perform; and (2) binds each member of the consortium to every statement and assurance made by the applicant in its application. (34 CFR §75.128). The SEA designated as the applicant must submit the signed agreement with its application. (34 CFR §75.128)

3. Can an SEA submit an application as part of a multi-State consortium, and if so, can the partners from other States be higher education agencies or do all State partners have to include SEAs?

If an SEA is part of a multi-State consortium application, each consortium member must be an SEA that is, in its own right eligible to apply. (34 CFR §75.127) Therefore, each SEA that is part of a consortium applying for a grant must have personal finance in its own State education

standards and must include in the consortium application documentation of its own State personal finance standards.

4. Is an SEA allowed to partner with another SEA but not technically be party to a consortium application?

If an SEA does not or cannot apply as an eligible member of a consortium, depending on the circumstances, it may be a State entity that is part of a “project team” if it meets the “project team” requirements stated in the NIA. Among these is the requirement that a participating State entity work with the applicant State SEAs towards carrying out the funded project.

5. Is an entity allowed to submit multiple applications, one as an independent entity and one as part of a consortium?

Although an eligible SEA may submit an application individually and may also be included as an eligible member of a consortium that applies for a grant under this competition, we will not support the same activities under two grants (in the event that we award two grants).

6. Is an entity allowed to submit multiple applications, one as an independent entity and one as a partner of another entity but not technically a party to a consortium application?

If an eligible SEA has submitted one application as an individual eligible SEA and also participates in another application as a “partner” but not as an eligible member of a consortium of SEAs, then it has only submitted one application.

7. Is there any preference given to consortium applications?

No, there is no preference given to consortium applications.

8. What kind of documentation is ED expecting regarding the inclusion of personal finance in the State’s education standards?

Applicants must respond to all the requirements in the Federal Register notice. Included within these is the requirement that SEAs include in their applications documentation that their States have included personal finance in their State education standards. While it is not for the Department to attempt to identify the exact kind of documentation that States may choose to submit in response to this requirement, such documentation must be sufficient to support the assertion that a given State has identifiable personal finance standards within its State education standards, either as stand-alone standards, or as identifiable standards that are included within or are an integral part of, a related set of educational standards. We will review all documentation of State personal finance standards on a case-by-case basis.

9. What is meant by the “State’s existing financial literacy activities” requirement (page 43505 of the notice)?

As we state in the Notice, the requirement for a “State’s existing financial literacy activities” means that each application must include documentation of the State’s existing financial literacy education requirements, including the State’s personal finance standards and current State requirements for their implementation at the local educational agency level, as well as additional requirements listed in (b)(1) through (b)(4) on page 43505 of the notice. (75 FR 43505)

10. How many SEAs have submitted notification of their intent to apply for this grant?

A total of 21 eligible SEAs notified the Department of their intent to apply by the August 5, 2010 due date.

11. How many States will be funded under the Financial Education for College Access and Success Program?

As stated in the Federal Register notice, we estimate that we will make one award under the Financial Education for College Access and Success Program.

12. Will additional financial support be available in the form of grant renewal or continuation from funds allocated for this program for the next fiscal year?

No, additional funds will not be available for continuation awards under this grant in future years. This is a one-time grant. If funds are appropriated by Congress for this program in the future, the Department will hold a new grant competition.

13. Is it a requirement that the project director and key personnel assigned to the Financial Education for College Access and Success grant be employed by the SEA?

It is not a competition requirement that the project director or key project personnel be employed by the SEA nor do Federal rules expressly prohibit a grantee from having a project director or key project personnel that are employed by an entity other than the grantee. However, as noted elsewhere in these FAQs, subgrants are not authorized in this program and as the applicant, the SEA will be the grantee, the fiscal agent for the grant and the entity responsible to ED for carrying out all grant activities. Under EDGAR §75.701, the SEA will be required to “directly administer or supervise the administration of the project.” Under EDGAR §75.702, the SEA will be required to “use fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that ensure proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds.”

While we recognize that expertise for carrying out this project may reside in many places within the State, we would expect such expertise to be reflected not only in the project director and key personnel but also in the project team. As to the employment of the project director or key personnel, please note each applicant’s proposal for a project director and key staff must be accompanied by documentation demonstrating that these individuals are fully qualified to carry out the project and that the applicant SEA will be able to fulfill all grant administration requirements. Moreover, under the “Quality of Project Personnel” selection criterion, each application will be scored in part based on the qualifications of its proposed project director and key personnel.

14. How is the Financial Education for College Access and Success program funded? Is it from Perkins funds?

The Financial Education for College Access and Success program is authorized under the Fund for the Improvement of Education Program (FIE), title V, part D, subpart 1, sections 5411 through 5413 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 7243-7243b). The Department’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education is administering this grant.

- 15. Could you clarify whether an assessment must be developed with the funds, or whether an SEA or consortium of SEAs might identify an assessment that has already been developed, and perhaps augment or modify it?**

An SEA or consortium of SEAs may identify or develop assessments that produce valid and reliable information on student progress in the mastery of the content included in the proposed personal finance instructional materials. If a State proposes to use an existing personal finance assessment, it should pertain to personal finance as it relates to college access and success, and be closely related to the personal finance instructional materials to be developed under the grant.

- 16. Is the Department expecting a demonstrated increase in the number of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a result of this project?**

Yes, the Department is expecting a demonstrated increase in the number of FAFSA since research has shown that nearly two million low-and moderate-income undergraduates do not submit a FAFSA to apply for Federal financial aid even though many of them are eligible for Pell Grants. (American Council on Education. *Missed Opportunities Revised: New Information on Students Who Do Not Apply for Financial Aid*. Issue Brief, February 2006.) We have included a performance measure on the percentage of participating low income students who complete the FAFSA to assess the impact of this grant on the number of FAFSA applications submitted by low-income students.

- 17. Can the competitive preference priority - *commitment to additional funding to the project* – be met with in-kind contributions?**

Yes, to meet the competitive preference priority, non-federal contributions may include in-kind contributions such as facilities, equipment, supplies, services, and other resources.

- 18. Are subgrants or contracts allowable under this grant?**

Grantees may not make subgrants to other entities. Grantees are allowed to contract for services to carry out grant activities.

- 19. What is the process for obtaining an application form and submitting an application for the Financial Education for College Access and Success grant?**

Applications for grants under the Financial Education for College Access and Success competition must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement (refer to the Federal Register Notice, page 43508). Applications are accessible through the Department's e-Grants Web site at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

- 20. Who can I contact for clarification or additional information?**

For clarification or additional information, please contact: Laura.Messenger@ed.gov, (202) 245-7840, or Gisela.Harkin@ed.gov, (202) 245-7796.